

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method, executed by a node on a network, of transmitting identifying information about the node, the method comprising:

- (a) determining a current ~~node identifier~~ *NIC address* value;
 (b) retrieving, from a data storage at the node, a former ~~node identifier~~ *NIC address* value for the node; and
 (c) transmitting the current node identifier value and the former ~~node identifier~~ *NIC address* value.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein ~~(1) the value of the node identifier for any particular node in the network is dependent on one or more node identification attributes of that node, and~~ (2) determining the current node identifier value includes an attempt to detect the then-current ~~values of said one or more node identification attributes.~~ *NIC address value*

3. The method of claim 2, wherein the attempt to detect ~~said one or more node identification attributes fails to detect at least one of said node identification attributes,~~ *the then-current NIC address value is unsuccessful* and further comprising (i) retrieving, from a data storage at the node, a stored value containing the result of a past live detection of the ~~said one or more node identification attributes,~~ *the then-current NIC address* referred to as a previously-detected ~~node identifier~~ *NIC address* value; and (ii) transmitting the previously-detected ~~node identifier~~ *NIC address* value.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein (i) the node includes a network interface card, and (ii) the node identification information includes a network interface card value, referred to as a NIC address value.

1 *a* 5. The method of claim ~~4~~¹, wherein the NIC address value comprises a signature
2 portion and a pseudorandomly generated portion.

a 1 6. The method of claim 1, wherein the former ~~node-identifier~~^{NIC address} value is redundantly
2 stored in multiple partitions within the data storage at the node.

a 1 7. The method of claim 6, wherein (x) each copy of the former ~~node-identifier~~^{NIC address}
a 2 value is associated with a timestamp, and (y) retrieving the former ~~node-identifier~~^{NIC address} value
3 comprises retrieving the respective copy associated with the most recent timestamp.

1 8. A method, executed by a server node on a network, for recording, in a data-
2 base, information about a client node, comprising:

3 (a) receiving information from the client node, said information including

a 4 ~~node-identification~~^{NIC address} information for the client node that includes (i) a current ~~node-~~^{NIC}
a 5 ~~identifier value~~^{address}, and (ii) a former node-identifier value; and

6 (b) storing, in a record in the database associated with the node-
7 identification information, the current node-identifier value and the former node-identifier
8 value.

a 1 9. The method of claim ~~8~~⁸, wherein each of the current node-identifier value
2 and the former node-identifier value is a NIC address value.

a 1 10. The method of claim ~~9~~⁸, wherein the NIC address value comprises a signa-
2 ture portion and a pseudorandomly generated portion.

1 11. A program storage device readable by a processor in the node of a speci-
 a 2 fied one of claims 1 through ~~11~~ ^{3, 5 through 7, and 21 through 23,} and encoding a program of instructions including instruc-
 3 tions for performing the operations recited in the specified claim.

1 12. A program storage device readable by a processor in the server node of a
 a 2 specified one of claims 8 ^{and} ~~through~~ 10 and encoding a program of instructions including
 3 instructions for performing the operations recited in said specified claim.

1 13. In a node on a network, a data store comprising a machine-readable data
 2 structure accessible to a processor in the node and containing node-identification infor-
 a 3 mation for the client node that includes (i) a current ^{NIC address} ~~node-identifier~~ value, and (ii) a for-
 a 4 mer, ^{NIC address} ~~node-identifier~~ value.

9 1 14. The data store of claim 13, wherein each of the current node-identifier
 2 value and the former node-identifier value is a NIC address value.

a 1 15. The data store of claim ¹³ ~~14~~, wherein the NIC address value that constitutes
 2 the current node-identifier value includes a signature portion and a pseudorandomly gen-
 3 erated portion.

1 17. The data store of claim 16, wherein the current node-identifier value is a
2 NIC address value.

1 18. The data store of claim 17, wherein the NIC address value comprises a
2 signature portion and a pseudorandomly generated portion.

1 19. In a server node on a network. that includes a client node, a machine-
2 readable data structure accessible to a processor in the server node, comprising a current
3 NIC address value for the client node and a former NIC address value for the client node.

$a^2 \geq$

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